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New possibilities for the recovery of abandoned agricultural land in Mediterranean mountains: an example of planning in Troodos-Cyprus.

The increase in the abandonment of agricultural land in mountain areas and its impacts are such that its management is a condition for the sustainable development of mountain areas. The intensity of this phenomenon is more evident in the Mediterranean where the upsetting of equilibria within the agro-forestry-pastoral systems accelerates the weakening of their resilience. At the same time, abandoned agricultural land becomes a wasteland, degrading the rural landscape and magnifying various environmental issues (erosion, biodiversity...) as well as the risks associated with climate change (fires, floods, etc.).

The announcement refers to a plan to recover this land in the mountains of Cyprus, based on new intervention possibilities which stem from the creation of a favourable framework of exogenous factors and internal developments. On the one hand, the consumer shift towards quality as well as citizens' environmental awareness expand the multifunctional role of agriculture and mountain areas in general. On the other hand, the economic crisis and the exclusion of mountain areas from the intensive production model, strengthen their appeal as a place for production and residence/recreation. In this context, terroirs, pastoral livestock farming and the provision of ecosystem services enhance the value and output of agricultural land by favouring the recovery of abandoned plots.

The proposed plan is organised on the small scale of the community through participatory planning. The plan utilises the establishment of small zones of abandoned agricultural land due to its range and dispersal within the community. It connects the concession of abandoned land to the strengthening of the collective dimension of land use, embedded in a process of creating local resources, increasing the added value of products of the mountain economy (terroirs, pastoralism, tourism) and providing ecosystem services.